



VA Medical Center's 2003 Veterans Day Parade

Silvestre S. Herrera
Congressional Medal of Honor
Grand Marshal



The loss of two legs, below the knees, didn't stop Private First Class (PFC) Silvestre S. Herrera from accomplishing his mission. "I knew that I had to take care of my squad," he says. Armed with that knowledge PFC Herrera advanced with a platoon along a wooded road until stopped by heavy enemy machine gun fire.

As the rest of the unit took cover, he made a one man frontal assault on a strong point and captured eight enemy soldiers. When the platoon resumed its advance and was subjected to fire from a second emplacement beyond an extensive minefield, PFC Herrera again moved forward, disregarding the danger of exploding mines, to attack the position. He stepped on a mine and had both feet severed; but, despite intense pain and unchecked loss of blood, he pinned down the enemy with accurate rifle fire while a friendly squad captured the enemy gun by skirting the minefield and rushing in from the flank.

The magnificent courage, extraordinary heroism, and willing self-sacrifice displayed by PFC Herrera resulted in the capture of two enemy strong points and the taking of eight prisoners.

His valiant efforts and acts of bravery earned him the prestigious Congressional Medal of Honor. President Harry S. Truman presented the medal for "individual gallantry at the risk of life, above and beyond the call of duty." Those who receive the award are called recipients, since there is no competition or contest to obtain this award. It is earned by their sacrifice.

Because of his heroics and concern for his fellow man, we are honored to have Silvestre S. Herrera as one of our Grand Marshals for the Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center's Veterans Day Parade.